North-South Collaboration: A Canadian Perspective

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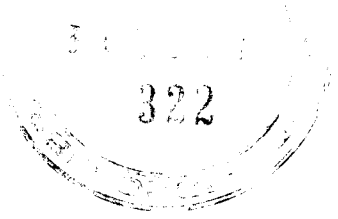

September 1986

I wish to acknowledge the critical and very useful insights given to me in the preparation of this paper by the following people: James Mullin, Rachel DesRosiers (IDRC); Joseph Farrell, (OISE); Glenn Eyford, Carl Urion, R.E. Peter (University of Alberta); Peter Landstreet, Roger Schwass, Jack Craig, Michel Chevalier, Fred Carden (York University); G.W. Towers (University of British Columbia);

While much of the credit for the ideas and lines of analysis in this paper are directly attributable to the above people, the final presentation and any errors, omissions or weaknesses in it are my own and not the responsibility of either the individuals who participated or of IDRC as an organization.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) was established in 1970 as an autonomous corporation funded by the Parliament of Canada. Its mandate is to encourage and support research initiated and conducted by developing countries into the socio-economic problems impeding their development, and on the application and adaptation of knowledge for the solutions of those problems. Within this framework, the majority of IDRC grants are made directly to developing country research institutions in response to submitted proposals. Technical resources from Canada or other countries are provided only in a relatively few instances through short-term consultancies on the basis of the project's own recognized need for additional technical assistance.

In 1980, the Centre introduced a new budget category for the support of projects undertaken on an expressly collaborative basis, jointly by Canadian and developing country institutions. Motivation for this "co-operative programme" mechanism came largely from the requests of Third World countries themselves that they be accorded more comprehensive, sustained access to professional and technical research resources in Canada as a means of building and improving local research capacities. It came also from a more general recognition, exemplified most poignantly in forums such as the Brandt Commission, of the need for more "concrete expressions of human solidarity" based on mutual interest of North and South in fostering economic growth and social justice and in reducing the threat to international peace posed by the "North/South divide".

The initiation of the Co-operative Programme (CP) was not without controversy within the Centre. There was considerable concern that it not be undertaken at the expense of resources intended for direct support to developing countries and, more particularly, that it not undermine the Centre's fundamental policy that supported projects reflect as fully as possible the immediate needs and priorities of the developing countries themselves. In establishing the CP, therefore, two important decisions were taken. Firstly, the CP was provided by the Government of Canada its own budget separate from and in addition to the Centre's regular ODA allocation. Secondly, it was required that the Co-operative Programme set clear funding criteria consistent with those of the Centre overall: relevance of the research to the developing country's development problems, contribution to strengthening its research capacity, and an applied research topic with policy focus.

In general, support for co-operative projects was to follow the normal pattern of grants made to research institutions (government, university, NGO or private) for self-contained, fairly narrowly focussed studies. The details of how most effectively and fairly the Centre's traditional project criteria could be implemented in the case of a dual clientele, and the consequent need to balance the research interests, expertise and traditions of both, were not set in stone at the outset. Rather, the specific application of the subtler processes of project identification, funding and monitoring in a way that would be most appropriate to co-operative grants was left largely to evolve through the actual experiences of the Centre's divisions*, the Co-operative Programme and the Canadian and LDC research communities.

One result of this fairly open-ended approach has been that each division has tended to develop a rather different character in its co-operative projects. One, for example, has used this mode of funding largely as a means of exploring or expanding research areas identified as priorities for its own programme; in a sense, contracting Canadian researchers to work with developing country teams to assess the viability of new themes or to introduce innovative and/or alternative research strategies into LDC research agendas. A second has used co-operative grants principally as a means of providing to LDC teams longer-term technical assistance than would otherwise be feasible within the normal project framework (in which one tries to keep assistance expenses and professional involvement of northern researchers to a minimum). A third division comes perhaps closest to the intended "ideal" of the co-operative concept by insisting that, as with normal single-recipient projects, principal initiative and control for the activity be explicitly in LDC hands --or the argument clearly presented for such not being the case. While this pro-LDC bias is easily justified within the IDRC mandate, it has raised the question of whether it also diminishes somewhat the purity of the co-operative relationship, inhibiting the fullest expression of Canadian input and inclining the interaction toward more of a technical assistance paradigm than one would want. This is an issue to be developed later.

*IDRC is divided into four programme divisions: Health Sciences,Information Sciences, Agriculture/Food Sciences, and Social Sciences. Part of the CP budget is allocated to each of these divisions to use in the development of co-operative projects within their respective disciplines; part is administered by the CP itself for other research areas e.g. earth sciences.

The somewhat "trial and correct" approach to the development of the Co-operative Programme continues, but the Centre is now clearer and more confident as to how best to facilitate both the co-operative philosophy as well as the mechanism itself. What follows in this paper is an attempt to reflect something of this current philosophy from the perspective both of IDRC and its particular mandate, and of some of its Canadian recipients.

Co-operation: What it means

In describing North-South research interactions, a distinction can be drawn among at least three types of relationships: individual fieldwork by visiting scholars, typically northern scholars to southern sites; short and long term technical assistance and consultancies; and co-operation. The three range along a continuum of low to high in terms of degree of joint ownership of the research activity by the two sets of actors involved. The issue of "access" consequently takes on a progressively reduced relevance, of course, since in moving to the high end, one moves toward the position where those who supply the data bases and field-sites (the South) also share in the selection and implementation of research objectives and the storage and analysis of data.

On the one hand, it is somewhat of an academic exercise to try to assess the inherent value of one approach vis-à-vis the others; each has its own purpose, parameters, processes and outcomes in terms both of research product and of impact on participants. For anyone concerned, however, that the activity serve to enhance the quality and relevance of development-focussed research, to strengthen LDC research capacity, and to improve reciprocity between North and South, it is in fact imperative that an evaluative stand be taken. IDRC, in initiating the Co-operative Programme, has obviously attempted to take such a stand in the belief that a cross-cultural research activity can both contribute to the generation of new and useful knowledge and serve a broader development purpose--if the nature of the relationship is of a certain kind.

By definition, co-operative research projects imply both a logistical and a philosophical phenomenon. Most simply, they are projects that take place in at least two venues, albeit not necessarily with identical activities taking place in each. As such, they involve--as single-site studies typically do not--research questions and analytical paradigms that are at once locally-relevant but not parochially limited. The particular problem that motivates the study in the first

instance may reflect more one side than the other; for IDRC projects certainly this is the case given the Centre's insistence that any research it funds be applicable first and foremost to socio-economic development issues in the LDC. However, to be genuinely co-operative, it is essential that the research questions subsequently posed address equally the theoretical and/or applied interests of both partners and that both sites recognize the potential relevance of the findings to their respective national settings and to theory building in those settings.

Philosophically, the concept of co-operation is a rather subtle one, and is, first and formost, a matter of attitude and intention. Specific operational strategies to ensure that collaboration actually occurs are, of course, necessary. But these are mechanisms only and not sufficient to making the interaction genuinely "co-operative".

In understanding the concept, a contrast with technical assistance is instructive. Technical assistance implies the provision of a service,--time-limited, task-specific and typically a-contextual in its relative lack of attention to the social, organizational or theoretical factors obtaining in the project. Co-operation, in the ideal, constitutes a much broader relationship, one based explictly on the assumption of equity, and on the mutual respect for and acknowledgement of each side's particular strengths and limitations, socio-organizational context, research interests, and the rights and abilities of each to contribute substantively to the work. Individual consultants operating within the framework of technical assistance may and hopefully would guide their interaction on the basis of openness to and respect for the local setting. Such a mind-set, however, is not necessary to the technical assistance activity as is the case in collaboration.

Whereas technical assistance assumes the provision of a solution to a pre-determined, usually narrowly defined problem (e.g. how to apply a particular statistical model or develop and deliver a curricular package), co-operation assumes instead that participants "buy into" a sustained period of intellectual exchange and mutual learning wherein the definition of the problem itself is open to exploration. A technical assistant is expected to come equipped with an answer. Co-operating partners must come prepared to enter into on-going negotiations to establish joint ownership of the research agenda and shared responsibility for its implementation, and to work toward the development of a whole new synthesis of theory and/or practice.

Most fundamentally, perhaps, the distinction between technical assistance and cooperation is in terms of education. Collaboration provides an educational opportunity for the development and acquisition of new learning on both sides; technical assistance provides more typically the opportunity simply to transfer existing knowledge from one side to the other. In technical assistance, the advice proferred might well be ignored if, for theoretical, practical, political or organizational reasons, it is not deemed to "fit". Ideas put forward in a co-operative association, however, will (or should) more rarely be considered incongruent. The time, tolerance and dialogue ideally part of the co-operation's negotiating process should serve to ensure the initial relevance of any suggestion made, and consequently to facilitate its operational or theoretical adaptation. Negotiated research strategies and analyses in cooperative associations should never, of course, imply acceptance of the sub-standard, via a search for the lowest common denominator. They should instead provide the catalyst for ensuring a more creative excellence.

Co-operation: How it works

> "It is a long and difficult process, as well as a fragile one. It is affected by actions in both national settings as well as within each organization. It is influenced by two cultural patterns, cultural biases and ethnocentricity".
>
> "There is one hell of a lot of work, mostly thankless, involved in collaborative research, just to keep in contact".

Based on the preceding discussion and reinforced by the two Canadian co-operants quoted above, it appears very much the case that effective collaboration constitutes more of an art than merely a strategy for combining research sites. And it is an art that is not easily accomplished. It demands continuing attention, communication and negotation not simply designing and implementing the research agenda--difficult enough tasks in themselves--but also in coming to terms with the dynamics of the relationship. The various elements needing to be dealt with are slippery conceptually and operationally (what they are and how to achieve them): shared perceptions and mutual control; open lines of communication; appropriate levels of trust and of balance between flexibility and chaos; and adequate attention to two sets of political, institutional and professional sensitivities. Evolving through all of this should be the development of a kind of third alternative (a "middle ground" as one Canadian

co-operant team terms it): a research perspective and/or style that is neither of one side nor the other completely but that fairly represents both; one that is professionally and personally satisfying to both partners (and the donor); and one that is clearly "better" theoretically and/or operationally than a position vis-à-vis the research that either partner could have achieved alone.

These are obviously not elements or objectives that can be mandated ahead of time, nor does there exist an easy step-by-step way to achieve them. Continuing dialogue and trial-and-error monitoring to clarify, elaborate and reconfirm are the principal strategies, and one that require specific personal qualities as well professional/academic ones. In selecting "successful" collaborators one needs to consider not simply the technical expertise of the researchers, but also their ability to facilitate a mutually exploratory, teaching-learning relationship.

Collaboration, as defined in this paper, is an ideal type; no cooperative project funded by IDRC likely conforms to it in all dimensions. As suggested earlier, one aspect in particular where the Centre's approach can perhaps be questionned is its tendency to adhere to a kind of "deficit model" in justifying the decision to fund projects as co-operative rather than regular, single-site grants. With some exceptions, the rationale used most often in selecting the Co-operative Programme route seems to stress the gap in LDC capacity, the particular lack of knowledge, expertise, technology, materials or experience which collaboration with the Canadian institution will remediate or "fill-in". Where such a rationale has not been the case--where equality of expertise has been made in fact the basis of the collaboration (i.e. to share these respective strengths)--such projects have tended to be challenged especially for their lack of clearly identified "gaps to fill".

Application of this deficit model is not unwarranted or logically unreasonable; it is in fact, fully consistent with IDRC's paramount concern that all research it supports be based on LDC-identified need (that it not, for example, be undertaken simply because a Canadian academic feels that developing country data will advance his/her own research interests). It is, however, a stance that perhaps too strongly reinforces a technical assistance modality in projects, tending to cast the Canadian partner into a position of service (doing for) rather than reciprocity (doing with), and the LDC institution into an unnecessarily passive, aid-recipient role. It may be a stance

that too readily encourages a short-term, knowledge-transfer perspective, with the attendant idea that a principal objective of the Canadian team should be, as quickly as possible, to build itself out of a job.

Such would be a fully appropriate strategy in a technical assistance consultative paradigm wherein the goal for the LDC researchers is to learn a specific skill or for the Canadians to perform, for the former, a specific task. It is not, however, an appropriate strategy within the co-operative context. Here, the objective should be the opposite: not to seek the end of the relationship but to build it into something better, to create a more permanent, comprehensive pattern of exchange that will serve to extend over the long-term the research paradigms, skills and energies of both teams, and strengthen the commitment to research of both institutions involved.

Imbalance in administrative and substantive power is a real and on-going danger in co-operative research, regardless of the commitment by each side to maintain equity. In many cases, it is simply a matter of the overwhelmingly greater knowledge and resource base typically available to the northern partner, and the resultant sense of professional confidence, expertise and technical capabilities that these imply. It often "makes sense" to store and analyze the data in the Canadian institution since that is where the computers and their programmers are. It also, unfortunately, denies to the South fair control over the data and the opportunity to acquire both data processing skills and the confidence to use them. It will cost more in time, money and energy to share control of the data and or to build up analysis capacities in the LDC institution, but these are costs which co-operation, if genuine, demands. Similarly, while it may "cost" Canadian co-operants in working with weaker research teams consciously to hold back the conviction with which they express their ideas, to adopt a more facilitative, iterative style in evolving the reseach, it is a cost to be borne. The issue here is most assuredly not one of condescension; in many cases, the LDC co-operants will, in fact, have the comparative advantage when it comes to understanding innately and realistically the dynamics of the development problems being studied. Rather, it is a matter of both sides keeping clearly in mind that the purpose of collaboration is to achieve a better research product by virtue of its being a legitimate synthesis of two perspectives, and that any convictions one side might have are meaningless if not made subject to, and tested by, exposure to different research paradigms and problem settings of the other.

Collaboration: How it can be facilitated

It is clear, then, that the effective implementation of co-operative projects demands attention both to logistical considerations and, even more importantly, to interpersonal ones. Each of the three sets of actors (donor, recipient institutions, and researchers) plays a critical role in this process--roles not necessarily well-recognized nor easily enacted but roles which need to be considered in operationalizing the activity.

(a) Donor: IDRC processes cooperative projects in in much the same way as it does single-site grants. A research proposal, in full or partial form, is reviewed by relevant professional staff of the Centre to assess technical merit, feasibility, relevance to applied development issues, national priority, research team and institutional capacity, and compatibility with divisional funding parameters for that period. This review process is typically an iterative one of negotiation and development, as opposed to a simple decision to fund or not. It is a process, therefore, that often continues over many months through a series of visits and correspondence. The formal document on which a final decision for funding is made approximates something of a thesis research proposal, with specific problem statement, research objectives, methodology, intended outcome, budget and schedule delineated. In IDRC's case, reference is also made to the potential beneficiaries of a grant, given the Centre's mandate to fund only applied development research. Projects typically last from 2-4 years, with budget allocated to fieldwork, equipment costs, limited travel and sometimes a stipend or honorarium. Monitoring is done by Centre staff through both regular progress reports from the project and site visits (typically 2-3 over the course of the grant). Much of this monitoring focuses on resolving administrative and financial problems; given time and workload constraints, many officers tend to feel too limited attention is available for monitoring the technical aspects of the research process.

In the case of co-operative proposals, the process is essentially the same but obviously more complex. Though proposals are usually presented jointly, such is not always the case. Occasionally, because of the better facilities and proximity of the Canadians, a proposal will come from just that side, with the LDC team represented somewhere along a continuum of being a fully-involved but "by mail" participant, a silent partner, or simply an interested party prepared to follow the Canadian lead. More rarely, an LDC will submit a proposal with

the request that a Canadian co-operant be identified by IDRC. (The opposite is never true, that IDRC would select on behalf of a Canadian institute an LDC partner). IDRC staff themselves will on occasion suggest turning a single-site LDC proposal into a co-operative activity where that form of sustained resource input is considered necessary to achieving the intended objectives. The more IDRC takes an active role in forming these linkages, of course, the more care is needed to ensure both that adequate reciprocity and balance of control eventually obtains between the co-operating teams and that the donor's role while perhaps directive, is not at the same time intrucive.

Once a linkage is established, of course, the complexity continues for IDRC in having to negotiate the project development process with two sets of proponents. While each may be expressing commitment to the same research agenda, each will nonetheless reflect different experiences, perspectives and traditions. Identifying possibly varying degrees of commitment or mismatched operational definitions, theoretical orientations or priorities in objectives is a necessary but not necessarily straightforward or easy process, nor is it always in the end feasible.

One question to be considered of course, is whether in fact IDRC should apply single-site methods of project development to co-operative ventures. Is it realistic or appropriate, for instance, to demand a fully delineated proposal in advance of a decision to fund a co-operative project? Do we thereby risk the possibility of premature closure on a process made richer through the in-depth exploration of the initial problem and, subsequently, of the research design and methodology? As discussed earlier, cooperation is ideally an evolutionary phenomenon, with the two partners working in tandem to determine not only how the research can best be implemented but the nature of the research question itself. Collaborative projects may need to be approached in a much more open-ended way, to begin with funding well in advance of the point where objectives and strategies are clarified--at the time where the clarification is itself initially begun. The co-operative project should perhaps begin not with the research <u>per se</u> but with the process of establishing the art of co-operation.

It is probably not by chance that the more successful of IDRC's co-operative projects have developed not with the project as the raison d'être of the relationship, but as simply one "event" within a much broader, already established one. Where northern and southern research colleagues have met as

visiting scholars, as student and teacher, or as consultants and have subsequently discovered common professional interests and compatibility, a jointly conducted research project provides simply another vehicle, albeit a particularly useful one, for furthering their communication and allowing each to develop its own academic or institutional ends.

Where such a relationship does not exist (where, for example, IDRC initiates the partnership), building that relationship becomes a considerably more time-consuming and delicate exercise. For donor staff, it becomes also risky as one moves from the role principally of funder to one of arbiter. How far can and should an agency like IDRC go to ensure mutuality or equity between the teams, especially if the teams do not themselves recognize these goals as important? The technical assistance modality, after all, has a long and pervasive history in North-South relations, and will lead both sides to expect and to feel comfortable within the dependency paradigm.

In this circumstance, the donor is faced with two potentially conflicting tasks: verifying that the relationship is truly cooperative (as per its philosophical definition of that term) while simultaneously stimulating the development of that cooperation. One pre-emptive strategy might be for donors interested in funding co-operative projects to adopt the practice of oil companies in their quest for viable wells--to invest a reasonably high sum of "venture capital" in trial explorations. Based on its own knowledge of professionally sound and/or potentially influential research institutions, a donor might provide, for example, support (north to south and vice-versa) to individuals for fairly long-term stages (study visits, or graduate-level working scholarships) and for multi-disciplinary, multinational state-of-the-art conferences on development themes it sees as having particular potential for co-operative studies. IDRC supports many of these types of activities already, of course. It rarely, however, initiates them catalytically or speculatively, expressly for the purpose of providing a forum through which cross-national partnerships might, or might not, "take".

In current practice, a co-operative project begins at a later stage--typically where the institutions have come together around a specific project. In this case, Centre staff must attempt a kind of testing of the relationship (explicitly or implicitly) to ensure reciprocity. An increasingly frequent means of doing this is through pre-project meetings enabling the two sides to come together to clarify objectives, select methods

and set agendas. These meetings provide IDRC staff an opportunity to assess the dynamics of the interaction and to gauge whether equity is likely to be maintained in areas such as budgetary control (each partner usually receives its own funds but agreement is needed as to who spends what, when and for what); where data are to be stored and analyzed; who will publish what and how adequate cross-team acknowledgements will be guaranteed; how accessible each institution's resources will be to the other's staff and students; and what strategies for incorporating each partner into the other's professional networks are feasible.

In terms of scheduling, co-operative projects seem to need a considerably longer time-line than the average 2-3 years currently allocated to IDRC grants. A six-year period was the minimum most frequently suggested by Canadian co-operants: two years to build the team (laying the basis of co-operation); two years for the intensive study; and two years for the process of weaning away from the security of the project and towards forming a more mature, self-sustained (albeit perhaps less focussed) type of collaborative arrangement.

Within the co-operative project itself, there are certain points where direct face-to-face interaction is essential if control over the research is to remain balanced between the two teams; if the direction and substance of the study is genuinely to reflect both perspectives; and if the opportunity for the contextual realities of the two sites to influence the research is to be realized--in other words, if those factors that give the co-operative study its comparative, cross-cultural advantage are to be developed. Not surprisingly, the times when these points of contact are considered necessary reflect the critical stages in the research itself:

(i) at the design of the study, particularly where the underlying development problem is to be clarified and translated into specific research questions, objectives, operational definitions, analytical concepts, etc;

(ii) at the initial data collection where the teams affirm in practice the congruences assumed in (i) and begin to work out the various snags in operationalizing definitions, selecting samples, etc., that are bound to occur;

(iii) at the the "first cut" of the data, when the basic analytical framework is set and decisions are taken as to which of the various data pieces will be applied to that schema and how; and

(iv) at the drafting of the first substantive report, when the overall tone of the analysis and the final conclusions and recommendations are determined.

The duration and frequency of any one of these meeting points is dependent on the characteristics of the groups, of course, and on the nature of the research design. Traditional agro-experimental studies probably require fewer meetings, with more attention to a documentation of procedures through detailed activity logs. Action or ethnographic studies require likely shorter but more frequent and spontaneous contacts in order to sustain and best profit from their particular evolutionary quality.

Based on Canadian experience, it appears that most of these meetings can and do occur because researchers on both sides are creative in their use of serendipity, "piggy-backing" the co-operative work on other travel/conferencing events. Formally, however, the need for such personnel exchanges will eventually imply the acceptance on all sides, most particularly by the donor, of considerably more financial, administrative and logistical costs. A co-operative grant cannot be done cheaply nor can it be budgeted and managed as a simple project is, if it is to achieve its potential and be something other than merely a single project conducted in more than one place. The demand for continuous communication (directly and through correspondence), longer time lines, flexible and open-ended agendas, frequent travel--all resulting in "messy" administrative arrangements and large budgets--are characteristics inherent to the co-operative modality and for which the donor must be ready to "bite the bullet" once it decides to pursue this particular route.

(b) The same is true for the co-operating institutions. Co-operative research projects cannot be expected to meet their own institutional costs, and will most certainly not result in the kind of profits accruing from contract research activities. IDRC CP grants, for example, cover explicit research expenses; they do not as a rule pay an overhead fee to cover a university's infrastructural costs; e.g. secretarial pools, equipment use, mail room services, heat/light etc. Similar to single-site grants to LDC's, such fees are not paid based on the assumption that the absorption of these expenses constitutes tangible proof of an institution's commitment to the research and so, presumably, of the local relevance of that research.

The validity of this particular logic, ideal though it is, probably escapes most higher education/research institutions

hard pressed for operating funds. Certainly the administrators of Canadian institutions have become increasingly vociferous over the past several years in demanding compensation for infrastructural costs--usually at a fixed percentage ranging from 10 to 35% of the overall project grant. On philosophical and fiscal grounds, IDRC has been fighting this trend, the latter because the resultant increases in project costs would result in fewer projects being supported.

The university's counter-argument is twofold. Firstly, without overhead, they will have simply to stop participating in Cooperative Programme projects, and thus deny to IDRC and LDC's the benefits presumably seen as accruing from such projects. This threat is being diminished somewhat by the university researchers themselves, however, who more frequently are putting pressure on their respective institutes to backdown, suggesting as an alternative the establishment of an independent contracting association made up of development-oriented scholars.

The universities' second argument is substantively more compelling: in addition to the benefits accruing from a co-operative research exercise in and of itself, the inclusion of the Canadian university with its attendant infrastructural strengths and presumably high academic standards provides to IDRC the kind of continuous and comprehensive monitoring and mediating functions that the Centre cannot on its own sustain. Programme officers typically can visit a project perhaps 2-3 times during its lifetime, and then for short periods; Centre accountants confer on-site with projects almost never. In a Co-operative Programme project, however, the Canadian institution's technical and administrative input can (or should) provide something akin to a "hidden benefit", one perhaps insufficiently reflected in thin budgets as a recipient contribution. If so acknowledged, however, it is a contribution that would then need to be more explicitly formalized.

Negotiation on the overhead issue continues. One requirement that would certainly have to be made of Canadian institutions receiving support beyond immediate research costs is that they begin to pursue a more active development education role in Canada than is currently the case. According to a recent Ontario/IDRC conference on co-operative research, the message was clear that successful collaboration demands an "appropriate institutional base" on the Canadian end, one that not only permits but actively supports and encourages international development work through the provision of seed-money (venture capital?) to staff trying to establish LDC-Canadian linkages;

the creation of development-oriented centres of excellence within or associated with tertiary institutions; and more substantive contributions to domestic development education programmes, including better and more creative dissemination of the knowledge generated through LDC research.

The sentiment very appropriately seemed to be that, as recipients of part of the Canadian aid dollar via IDRC, domestic research institutions must bear the obligation of serving the development cause and not merely live off its proceeds. Too rarely, it appears, do these institutions now collaborate fully as institutions in terms of providing an effective learning setting. Most partnerships begin and remain at the level of the individual researchers (this despite IDRC's funding only institution-institution contracts). More often than not, unfortunately, co-operant researchers characterize their respective institutions as not merely not contributing to the process but as actually impeding it through a variety of bureaucratic hurdles.

While not in itself probably overly dysfunctional, such isolation of the research from the rest of the institution seems clearly a case of missed opportunity in respect of the cooperative ideal i.e. a broad base for inter-team or inter-institutional training; wide access to technical/material resources; increased opportunities for network exchanges; and overall the possibility of more creative insight more insofar as the full potential of the human resource "mosaic" available within an academic institution (talent, experience and theoretical perspective) can be made available to the evolving research. In the final analysis, of course, all research is in the hands of the individuals doing it. But the intellectual richness of the institutional context should certainly be able to play a signficiant and possibly crucial role in enhancing the activity, most particularly in the areas of training, dissemination and policy-linkage. And it is a role that Canadian institutions should as much as possible be encouraged by IDRC to play in any collaborative venture it supports.

(c) The researchers are, obviously, the critical actors in the initiation and implementation of co-operative project, and most of this paper has concentrated on the professional and personal qualities seemingly required of them to make co-operation "work". It is clearly not a style of research that more than a relatively few northern (or even southern) researchers would want to take up, nor is it one that those who do take up will do well. Clearly, too, the benefits resulting

from the exercise must somehow be deemed to outweigh the many costs involved; it is this issue of benefits that will be discussed in the next and concluding section.

Collaboration: Why do it

To use a deficit model in rationalizing co-operative research is essentially to adopt a functionalist approach. In this approach, collaboration is useful because it will address a need; co-operation becomes a means to the end of filling-in the deficits of LDC research capacities. An alternative approach, of course, is one that acknowledges co-operation as a valuable end in itself.

It is clearly the position taken here, and to an extent within IDRC overall, that there is in cooperative research an inherent good--irrespective of the gaps in knowledge or expertise it may serve to fill. Co-operation in research has value in the potential it holds for generating creative syntheses and new learning, for looking at and solving old problems in new ways. Through the intellectual synergy of two theoretical, cultural and experiential perspectives exploring a common problem and the personal energy typically stimulated by common enterprise, collaboration may well result in redressing a deficit; it should, however, be able to do much more besides.

It is difficult, of course, to measure the relative advantages of cooperative vs. single-site studies, to assess the difference between actual costs and benefits and "what might have been". In more or less objective terms and if implemented well, co-operative projects have tangible benefits for both sides. For the LDC researchers, comprehensive and long-term association with a Canadian institution should help to mitigate the debilitating isolation from which they often suffer. In much of the Third World, there are not adequate research communities for supporting the interchange of ideas that is necessary to motivate and sustain rigorous, cumulative field research. By providing access to some of the supportive benefits northern researchers have come to take for granted (a continually evolving knowledge base, information about funding sources and publishing venues and opportunities for further training and participation in professional networks), collaborative projects should help to extend the scope and quality of the "research community" that is available to LDC scholars. For the Canadian partner, collaboration provides access to a new data base in a way that could never be achieved by working alone as a visiting scholar or technical consultant since in addition to more data, it provides

an improved view of those data given their mediation through the experience, perspectives and intuitions of those researchers actually living within that context.

For both sides, cooperation allows for more and more varied training opportunities to staff and students. It can introduce into the respective institutions new research ideas and, perhaps, stimulate new or revivified interest in research itself as an activity worth pursuing. (It should be noted, however, that foreign associations, given the money, outside training opportunities and knowledge connections they provide can also exaccerbate inter-professional rivalries in LDC institutions where such resources are scarce). On a broader level, the inclusion of a northern partner in a research study can often serve the advocacy function, facilitating the eventual dissemination of findings into the policy forum. Colonial mentalities unfortunately still exist in much of the Third World, with the result that northern scholarship is frequently accorded a credibility and importance denied to local researchers working on their own.

In terms of the research activity itself, multi-site analyses--if techically sound--obviously lend themselves to greater generalizability and a fuller testing of concepts, operational definitions and hypotheses. Practical development problems, as they apply in both Canada and the LDC, have thus the possibility of being better illuminated and the theories through which they are analyzed validated, rejected or modified with greater precision and assurance.

From a development perspective, co-operative research makes the issue of North to South "access" in a sense irrelevant insofar as it constitutes a rejection of the entire concept of the the North doing research on or in the South in isolation from the scholars of the South. The question of how to improve access then becomes, in essence, the wrong one. It perpetuates the paradigm that has characterized so much of North-South relations whether economic, social or intellectual; one in which the North removes from the South its raw materials (work, people and data), processes those materials for northern ends, and accumulates the resultant advantages, both of wealth and expertise.

Co-operative research recognizes that few, if any, development problems belong not to the South alone; the web of international affiliation in the causes and solutions of socio-economic problems in the Third World is a very real and pervasive one. It recognizes, too, that LDC researchers

typically do not function independently of the North, even in single-site, locally controlled projects. As one team of Canadian co-operants has noted, LDC researchers for the most part receive their basic training within the western paradigm, whether at home or abroad, but are usually then left to sink or swim (too often the former), having to operationalize that learning in a professional vacuum, conducting their research with the support neither of the technical and financial resources available to the North nor of access to the improvements that are made to those paradigms or to the methodologies for testing them. As suggested earlier, collaboration provides perhaps a more constructive means through which southern researchers can extend, modify or reject their initial learning, and through which the northern research community can redeem past errors and build new relations. According to that same Canadian team:

> "We see one of the key values in collaborative projects to be in the evolution of international development relations away from "fixing" the South--which we have not been very good at if Africa is any measure--to building capacity in the South to fix itself and to build capacity in the North to allow that to happen".